

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: DECONTROL AFTER ONE YEAR

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN, IT

SUBJECT: MARCH 1-2 CCU CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: ROME 2488 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY. DURING THE SUBJECT TWO DAY MEETING, THE 105 MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU) DECIDED TO CALL A FOUR HOUR GENERAL STRIKE, AT A DATE TO BE DETERMINED, BEFORE MARCH 15. PROPOSALS TO EMPHASIZE THE PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT LEVELS OVER MONEY ITEMS IN CURRENT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WERE DISCUSSED. A COMPROMISE WAS REACHED IN DECIDING TO ALLOW THE VARIOUS CATEGORY UNIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF PHASED WAGE INCREASES AND FRINGE BENEFIT IMPROVEMENTS. CISL SECRETARY GENERAL KRUNO STORTI, WHILE COUCHING HIS REMARKS IN THE CONTEXT OF A DEPARTING ELDER STATESMAN, LECTURED HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE NEED FOR ITALIANS TO WORK HARDER AND BE MORE PRODUCTIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CCU CENTRAL COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT SINCE PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT LEVELS SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY OVER WAGE GAINS IN THE CURRENT ITALIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS A LIMIT SHOULD BE PUT ON SALARY

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INCREASES ABOVE SEVEN MILLION LIRE (ABOUT 8,750 DOLLARS) PER YEAR.

INCREASED EARNINGS ABOVE THIS LIMIT WOULD BE DEPOSITED BY MANAGEMENT ON BEHALF OF AFFECTED EMPLOYEES IN A SPECIAL FUND WHICH WOULD NOT BE DRAWN UPON BEFORE 1977. THE CONTROVERSIAL SUGGESTION THAT WAGE INCREASES AND IMPROVED FRINGE BENEFITS BELOW THIS LIMIT BE PHASED OVER THE THREE YEAR TERM OF NEW CONTRACTS CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED WAS DEFERRED TO THE CATEGORY UNIONS IN VIEW OF WIDE DISSENT OVER THIS CONCEPT. IN ANY EVENT, IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT REQUESTED SALARY INCREASES SHOULD NOT EXCEED 30,000 LIRE (ABOUT 37.50 DOLLARS) PER MONTH ON THE AVERAGE. IN ORDER TO FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE MINORITY DC GOVERNMENT ON THE NEED FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN HOUSING, AND OTHER SOCIAL INFRA-STRUCTURES AND TO COORDINATE THE POLICIES OF THE MASSIVE STATE OWNED SECTOR, THE CCU CENTRAL COMMITTEE DECIDED TO CALL A FOUR HOUR GENERAL STRIKE, AT A DATE TO BE DETERMINED, BEFORE MARCH 15.

13. DURING THE DEBATE, CGIL NATIONAL SECRETARY RINALDO SCHEDA (PCI) SAID THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT SHOULD UNDERTAKE A REALISTIC SELF APPRAISAL OF ITS POLICIES IN VIEW OF THE GRAVITY OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION. "IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE SACRIFICES IN ORDER TO OBTAIN IN EXCHANGE POLITICAL SUCCESS. WE SHOULD THEREFORE ACCEPT THE PHASING OF SALARIES AS WELL AS FRINGE BENEFITS." THE LEADER OF THE CGIL METAL WORKER'S CATEGORY UNION BRUNO TRENTIN (ALSO PCI), WAS NOT IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH SCHEDA'S PROPOSAL TO PHASE SALARY INCREASES. HE ADVOCATED, RATHER, THAT ITALIAN UNIONS PROPOSE A NEW PROGRAM OF AUSTERITY, INCLUDING ABOLITION OF THE USE OF AUTOMOBILES ON SUNDAYS (AS IN 1973); THE SUSPENSION OF LONG WEEKEND HOLIDAYS; AND THE GROUPING OF HOLIDAYS IN ORDER TO AVOID FREQUENT DISRUPTIONS IN PRODUCTION PATTERNS CAUSED BY THE HOLIDAY HEAVY ITALIAN CALENDAR.

4. UIL SECRETARY GENERAL RAFFAEL VANNI EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO PROTECT AND EXPAND EMPLOYMENT LEVELS. CISL SECRETARY GENERAL BRUNO STORTI EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ALL ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO REJUVENATE, "EVEN THOSE WHICH GAINED DURING THE JUNE 15 REGIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS." HE SAID "NO ONE, INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS, SHOULD ASSUME THAT HE CAN CONTROL THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT." WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENT ITALIAN LABOR SITUATION, STORTI SAID "WE WORK TOO LITTLE IN ITALY AND PRODUCE LITTLE WITH THE RESULT OUR HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING IS PARASITIC AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDING THE WORKERS." STORTI'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOMEWHAT INCREDULOUS COLLEAGUES, WHILE STUNNED BY HIS FRANKNESS, APPLAUDED HIM NEVERTHELESS AS AN ELDER STATESMAN WHO IS PREPARING TO DEPART FROM THE ITALIAN LABOR SCENE. CISL NATIONAL SECRETARY FRANCO MARINI UNDERSCORED THAT HIS SUPPORTERS AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH SUGGESTIONS TO PHASE MINIMUM SALARY INCREASES. HE SUGGESTED THAT ITALY'S CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS COULD BE BEST RESOLVED BY INCREASING PRODUCTION LEVELS.

5. COMMENT. THE SUBJECT MEETING WAS EXPECTED, AS REPORTED IN ROME 2488, TO CLARIFY THE UNION POSIITION TOWARD THE MORO GOVERNMENT. IN FACT THEIR ATTITUDE REMAINS RATHER TENUOUS WHILE ANALOGOUS TO THAT OF THE PSI WHICH IS ONE OF "WAIT AND SEE". IT SEEMS CLEAR NOETHELESS THAT THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT IS INCREASINGLY CONSCIOUS AT ALL LEVELS OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN CREATING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WHAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ITALY'S CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS. ALL PARTIES, LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND POLITICAL, APPEAR TO BE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING SIMILAR TO A "SOCIAL CONTRACT" WHILE AVOIDING THE TERM ITSELF WHICH IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ITALIAN LABOR CIRCLES. THE CALL FOR A GENERAL STRIKE IS ONE OF THE FEW ACTIONS THE THREE CONFEDERATIONS CAN READILY AGREE UPON. IT PROVIDES A CHARADE WHICH COVERS UP OTHERWISE SERIOUS DIVERGENCES. VOLPE

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